BATTERY BOATMEN.

Only a Few of the Veterans Left About the Whitehall Basin.

Reminiscences of the Pa'my Days Before the Steam Tug Era.

Precarious Life of the Jolly Watermen—Sad Story of Dave Dillon.

The Battery boatman is a left-over character from another era. The tide of progress has swept him and his little boat into a little eddy by the shore; yet he clings to his boat and his traditions, and every visitor to the Battery Park, every pedestrian sniffing the bracing cool breezes from the sea as he paces the wall that skirts the park, loves him.

In a basin or dock, built like a niche in the wall of the Battery just west of the Barge Office, are always to be found moored six or eight rowboats, each provided with two sets of oars.

These boats are of the "Whitehall" pattern, 19 feet long, 20 inches deep and 4½ feet wide. Half as many more are to be found in the Whitehall basin on the other side of the Barge Office.

Pause to gaze wonderingly down at these boats, and instantly a half dozen men awaken from their drowsing on the park benches and hurry across the broad-paved walk to the edge of the wall, and one of them, coming within conversational distance, addresses you:

"Boat, sir?"

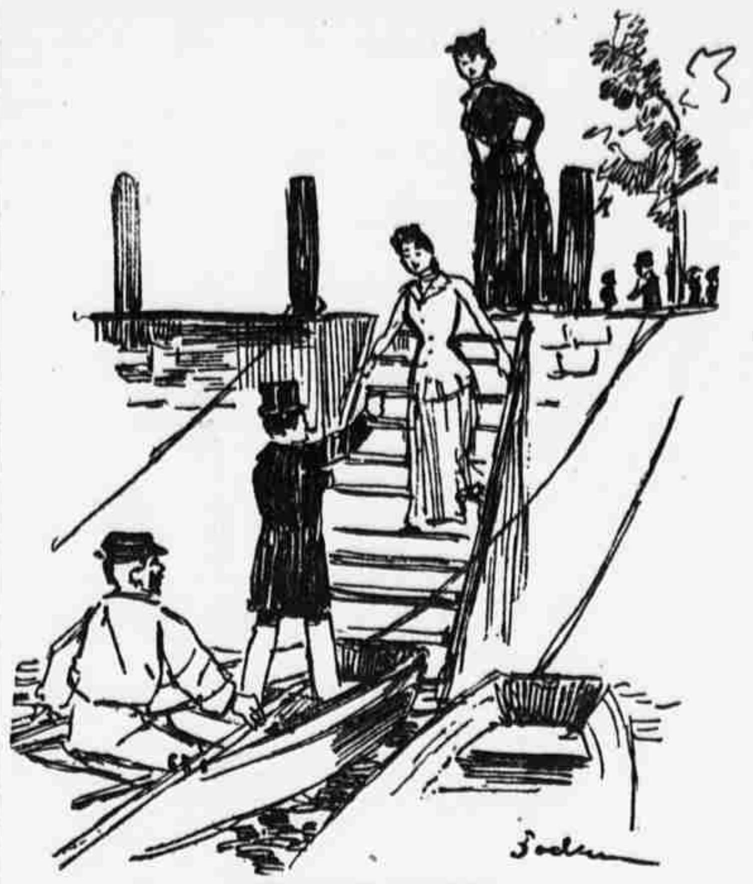
RACE OF RIVAL "RUNNERS."

Then the other five, apparently losing all interest, lazily return to the benches and their interrupted slumbers.

If you want to go to Brooklyn, to Astoria or to Yonkers. If you desire to board a vessel at anchor down the bay, or to go in your own craft to a ship at Quarantine, here's your man!

Look at him! He may be twenty, or he may be sixty years old. He is sunburned and freckled. He is compact. There is strength and suppleness in his every movement, and he will bargain to row you up to Yonkers or down to Sandy Hook, just as though those were the most ordinary jobs imaginable.

That's his business, and be he two-and-twenty year old Billy Collins or nine-and-sixty year old Ed Cody, he has been navigating the waters of New York Harbor in his Whitehall boat ever since his hands were big enough to clasp the handles of the oars.



GOING TO VISIT A MAN-OF-WAR.

"How many boatmen are there?" repeats Billy Collins, squinting one eye and pinching his knotty muscles reflectively. "Well, to begin with, there's Ed Cody, he's the oldest one of us. Then there's Tom Bresnihan over in the Whitehall basin; George Collins, that's me brother; Hen Darrow, 'Sailor' Dan McGean, Mike Geary, 'Bat' Nevill, Pat Burns, William Quigley and William Collins—that's me. That's ten of us.

"Naw, the business ain't what it used to be. Mostly our freight is runners for the ships' chandlers, ships' stores men, butchers, clothing stores, machinists and other people who want to do business with the masters of ships coming in.

"Course, once in a while there's ladies who want to go down to some man-o'-war, and of course we take 'em.

"How far do we go out? Well, down to the lightship, eight miles outside of Sandy Hook. There's no trouble out there—not half the trouble we get in a choppy sea on the bay."

There is only one oarsman to each boat, but the second pair of oars is for use in a very common emergency.

There is no competition for business among the boatmen on shore. The rule is that the boatman who first bespeaks a customer or who is hailed by a prospective customer shall not be interfered with by others, and once a passenger has by either of these processes become the property of one of the boatmen, the others abandon the game and return to their other work or amusement.

It frequently happens, though, that a sharp contest occurs between the Battery boatmen on the water. A contest of muscle and skill, of wind and experience and grit, and then the second pair of oars comes into use.

DAVE DILLON BLOWN OUT TO SEA.

Two hustling runners of rival dealers in ship's stores arrive at the basin at the same moment. Each selects his boatman and makes a hurried bargain for a quick trip to the merchant ship that is slowly coming up through the lower bay.

With lightning movements the painters are cast off, the runners clamber into the boats, and a race to a finish is begun. The boatmen are encouraged by their respective "freight" with all sorts of inducements, but both boatmen have learned their art and each is as experienced as the other. There is no advantage to either in the race.

Then the anxious runners leap into the breach. They place the extra oars in the rowlocks, and bend themselves to the ash with all their might. Thus it generally happens that the runner who has practised most with his muscles, and had most experience in boating, wins the race, reaching the incoming ship first, clambering over her side and from her deck laughing and shouting scornfully at his discomfited rival.

In these desperate races, sometimes one of the boatmen wins the race and saves himself a deal of right hard work by catching a tug bound out towards the ship and boarding her. The tug reached, the race is over. The boatman and his passenger ride away from their rivals, and far down the bay they part company from the tug, to row the short distance to the ship.

Most of the boats have names. Billy Collins call his the "Eel;" his brother George's boat is the "Game Cock."

The "Dave Dillon," is owned by "Hen" Darrow, who named the boat after one of the bravest, and best fellows who ever pulled an oar.

Poor Dave Dillon! He had been a boatman for thirty-five years, and a sturdy fellow he was, too. A steady, stout-hearted man, without an enemy in the world; a famous hand at the oars. He once rowed a Red Hook man around the lighthouse at Robbin's Reef and beat him out of sight, as any one of the Battery boatmen will tell you.

Dave Dillon located at Staten Island, and two years ago he took a job one day to row in a heavy sea out to a steamship that lay anchored in the roads off the lightship.

The wind blew a gale. It was a perilous undertaking. Thoughtful ones urged the cool and nervy boatmen not to go. But Dave Dillon had trusted to his strong arms and his right little, tight little ship in many a troubled sea, and he laughed to scorn the fears of his friends.

They watched him from the shore. Now riding on the crest of a foam-capped wave, now hidden, buried in the valley between billows almost mountain high. They watched till the little cockle-shell and its intrepid skipper passed out beyond the reach of human eye—passed out never to return.

Poor Dave Dillon! He was blown out to sea, and not till the sea shall give up its dead will he return. In the restlessness of tides Dave Dillon's boat came back as if to tell the awful story of its master's fate. It was washed by the flood up through the bays into the North River, and a week after Dave Dillon had gone down the shattered remnants of his Battery boat were picked up by one of his lifelong companions on the shore of the river at the Highlands.

In Summer evenings the Battery boatmen find profit in rowing pleasure parties on the bay or up the rivers, each boat carrying seven passengers without crowding. In former years one might hire one of the skiffs from its owner and be his own skipper, but eight or ten years ago an accident occurred that stopped that practice. A gentleman engaged one of the Whitehall boats for a pleasure ride with Mary Fitzpatrick, a sister of the man known as "Liverpool Jack," and another young woman.

The young man was a good oarsman, but the little boat had hardly rounded the Battery when she was run down by a small steamer, and before assistance could reach them, the young ladies were both drowned.

Since then, none of the Battery boatmen will let his boat to a stranger to go out without a skipper.

The work of the boatmen is varied. The other day when that crazed Italian immigrant tried to drown himself by leaping out of the Barge Office into the river, it was Peter Reilly and Mike Geary who saved the wretch's life in Mike's boat, Peter going along, because, despite of his calling, Mike can't swim a stroke.

RUN DOWN BY A STEAMER.

A boatman will row a passenger to Fort Lee at flood tide in an hour and a half or two hours. At ebb tide he will take the job just the same, trusting to luck in catching a tow from steam tugs going up the river.

Sunday, July 30, 1871, while the Battery boatmen were polishing up their trim craft, there came to their ears the noise of a terrific report.

The Staten Island ferryboat Northfield had blown up. The debris was coming down in a fearful shower upon the waters of the bay, and the flying forms of men and women were descried against the Summer sky.

The boatmen quickly cast off their moorings and rowed to the scene of the disaster. They did great work that day, plucking scores of people from out watery graves and saving many lives that must have been sacrificed without their help.

The law compels every excursion barge to have one "live boat." That is, a boat actually in the water, with a man ready to work her should any one fall overboard or any other accident happen requiring the services of a boatman. Battery boatmen are usually engaged for this service, the boats dragging along at the stern of the excursion or barges.

"August Struck" and "John F. Struck, of the Battery," are the names inscribed on the sterns of Mike Geary and "Bat" Nevill's boats. They are named in honor of a father and son, proprietors of the favorite tap-room in State street, a resort of all the Battery boatmen. Here an EVENING WORLD reporter found Ed Cody, the oldest of the boatmen.

Ed Cody is sixty-nine years old. He is tall, thin, sinewy and muscular. He has sharp features, but a mild and kindly blue eye, and side whiskers and mustache of white bristling hair.

"I've been a boatman here at the Battery fifty-one years. In fact, ever since before there was a Battery," says the veteran, cheerily. "When I began, Washington street was a strand, and the water came clear up over the present Park clear to Whitehall street.

"Castle Garden, built as Fort Clinton by Gov. Clinton, in 1807, was away out on a rock, and it was reached by a wooden bridge from the foot of Washington street. The bridge went over the shallow swamp between. There were about twenty-four boatmen then, but land o' love, when steam came in and sailing vessels went out of fashion, we went out of fashion, too, though there'd been boatmen to take people off to incoming ships and bring people ashore from 'em ever since old Cap May landed his Belgians at Coenties slip and founded New Amsterdam.

"In the forties there were my brother Dick Cody, and me. We were born at Roosevelt and Banker, now Madison street. There was Billy Wood, who has a gymnasium in Williamsburg, and William Morse. They're all alive yet. Dick is in the Dock Department's employ, and I'm the only one left a-boating.

"Before telegraphy was invented we used to carry the first news from shore to a ship and bring back the first European news from the ship. We used to help the ships up to their docks, carry lines ashore and all that kind of work that the steamtugs do nowadays. We used to have ten times the work that we get now.

"When I was a boy Gen. Jackson came here to Castle Garden for a reception after his second election to the Presidency. There was an awful crowd, and the bridge across the marsh broke down, letting the people into the mud and water. We boatmen turned to and rescued them.

READY FOR ACCIDENTS AT JENNY LIND'S CONCERT.

"In '41 the British frigate Warspit, commanded by Lord John Hay, came in and anchored off Castle Garden, right in among the shad-poles of the fishermen. The fishermen protested, but about that time England wanted to have another fight with us, and Lord Hay refused to budge, so one dark Saturday night we boatmen—there was James Harrington, Wash Harrington, John Connor, William Gayer, John Palmerton, Matt Lowery, Pat Hogan, Thomas Shadwick, Nat Coon, Dick Cody and me—we just stole out to the Warspit with pots of lime and painted her white from stem to stern.

"Next day was Sunday, and the whole town came down to laugh at her.

"In '42, Colt the revolver man, then in the torpedo business, blew up the sloop Jocko off the Battery. Myers's circus was in the Garden, and it made an addition to the show.

"In 1845 the Chinese junk, 200 days from Hong Kong, anchored out in the bay, and we made many a dime taking people out to see her.

"Then, in '51, there was Jenny Lind in Castle Garden. Barnum had the boatmen plying all around the Garden on the lookout for people who might get crowded off the thirty-foot sidewalk that went all around the building.

"Catherine Hayes and Mme. Fedesco followed the Nightingale at the Garden, and then in '52 or so, Dan Rice had his circus on the Battery and James Myers had his inside.

"Then came the Julien concert and ball, and they had a fountain of champagne in the rotunda. The 'longshoremen's ball was about the last big thing at the Garden before the Board of Emigration leased it from the State in 1855.

"There isn't much excitement any more: not 10 per cent. of the work for us to do. In all my experience I have known of but very few accidents, and they were usually to boats let out to people who thought they knew all about their management, but really didn't know anything.

"About a month ago Tom Bresnihan got capsized, and he's one of the best boatmen in the business. He's next to me in years of service. He's only been a boatman thirty-five years though. Tom got upset below Governor's Island and was picked up by a Staten Island ferryboat. That's the only upset I know of in years.

"About all we do nowadays is to carry trades people out to the ships in the bay and take small jobs as we can get by the day."

Ed Cody pulled his soft cap down a little over his gray old head, drew himself together, shifted his quid of tobacco, arose and strode out, six feet of stalwart, vigorous manhood, despite his nearness to the three score and ten years allotted to man for a lifetime, and the younger boatman looked after his retreating figure with admiring eyes and words of praise.

Unjust Criticism.

[From the Jewellers' Weekly.]

Manufacturing Jeweller—Your designs seem to lack point.

Designer—Point! Great Scott! And this after I have modeled for you more than seventy-five different kinds of pins!

A New Title.

[From Harper's Bazar.]

Parrott—How many great titles end in "or"—emperor, legislator, editor——

Wiggings (who lives in a flat)—Yes, and janitor.

Sad.

[From Harper's Bazar.]

Jones—Poor Smith lost his life, though every one else escaped out of the burning building.

Brown—Did they forget to waken him?

Jones—No. He was one of the first to receive the alarm; but the poor fellow was so excited that he tried to get out of the building by the fire-escape.

Frankly Deceptive.

[From Munsey's Weekly.]

Dicky—It was awfully deceptive of her, I think. She laughed at me behind my back.

Geawdge—Well, how did you know it, then?

Dicky—Oh, she told me of it herself.

CONCERNING CHEWING GUM.

Contains Paraffine Wax Which Is Very Dangerous in the Intestines.

The fine distinctions required by legal definitions frequently threaten confusion, even when the facts appear to be perfectly clear.

There is no room for doubting the inconvenience and danger which may arise from the accumulation of a mass of paraffine wax in the intestines; and yet when any legal interference with the sale of chewing gum, containing 50 per cent of this substance, is attempted the charming uncertainties and quibbles which arise are more amusing than edifying, says London *Lancet*.

In a recent prosecution at the Hanley Borough Police Court it was first contended that the fourteenth section of the Food and Drugs act, which relates to the division of the substance in the presence of the seller at the time of purchase, had not been complied with.

Then it was submitted that the article was not one of food, since it was sold simply for chewing.

Then it was suggested, that as sweets are so utterly indefinite in their composition, it was impossible to deal with them as ordinary articles of food. And the climax was reached in the contention that it was not sold to the prejudice of the purchaser, as the complainant said he did not intend to eat it.

This was extremely ingenious, but the purchaser happened to be the Inspector of Nuisances, who was merely collecting evidence. The case ended for the present with the imposition of a fine, on the ground that the substance was sold to the prejudice of the purchaser, inasmuch as it was not in the nature of the substance and quality of the article demanded by the purchaser, who asked for gum and got paraffine wax.

If the case is ever taken to a higher court it is quite possible that it may be argued that the complainant did not ask for "gum" but for "chewing gum;" that he did not get "paraffine wax," but only 50 per cent. of "paraffine wax," and the remaining 50 per cent. of unknown ingredients which sufficiently brings the substance within the legal meaning of "chewing gum."

But what is "chewing gum?" The following definition might be suggested: A substance of very variable composition, ignorantly employed by children, which, when containing paraffine wax, may lead to very grave dangers, and the sale of which should be prohibited.

A Family Tradition.

[From Life.]

Dunwalter—Why, sir, the Dunwalters for centuries, without an exception, scouted the idea of anything like trade, sir.

Woxby—Didn't believe in giving an equivalent for what they got, eh?

Didn't Want that Kind.

[From the Jewelers' Weekly.]

J. Jay—I want a fine lookin' watch chain.

Jeweller—Would you like one of the new seamless chains?

J. Jay—Seem less? Not much! I want one that'll seem more'n twice as big as it is.

A Sad View of It.

[From Texas Siftings.]

Gilhooly—This world is full of misery. The happiest man is the one who is never born.

Hostetter McGinnis—Yes, but there isn't one in a million that has such a streak of luck.

A Calumny.

[From Texas Siftings.]

"Do the Russians really eat candles?" asked a Washington lady of the Russian Ambassador.

"No, madam," was the reply; "it is a calumny, a tallow calumny, so to speak."